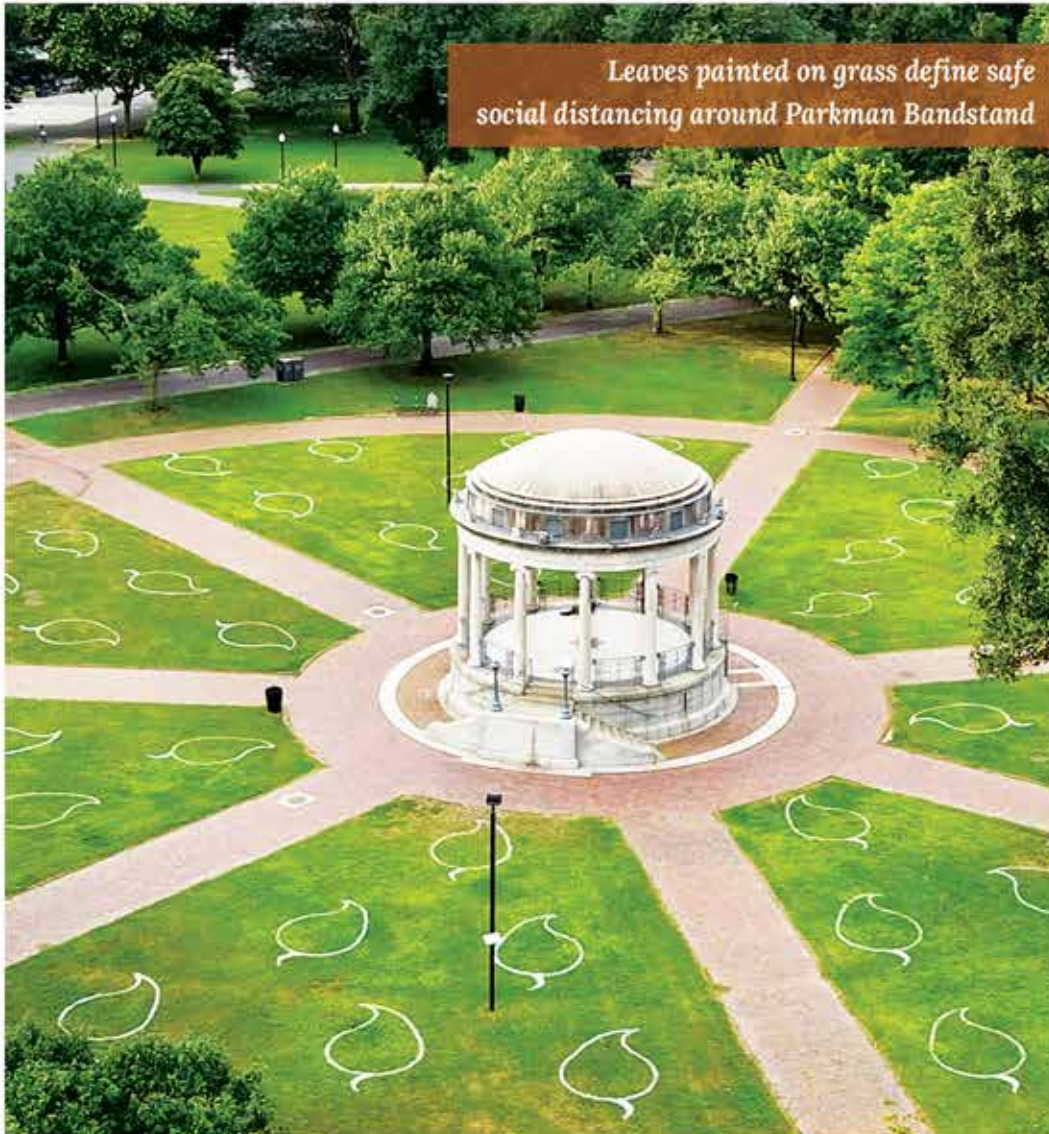




**BOSTON
PARKS &
RECREATION**
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor



2020

Annual Report

Boston Parks & Recreation Department

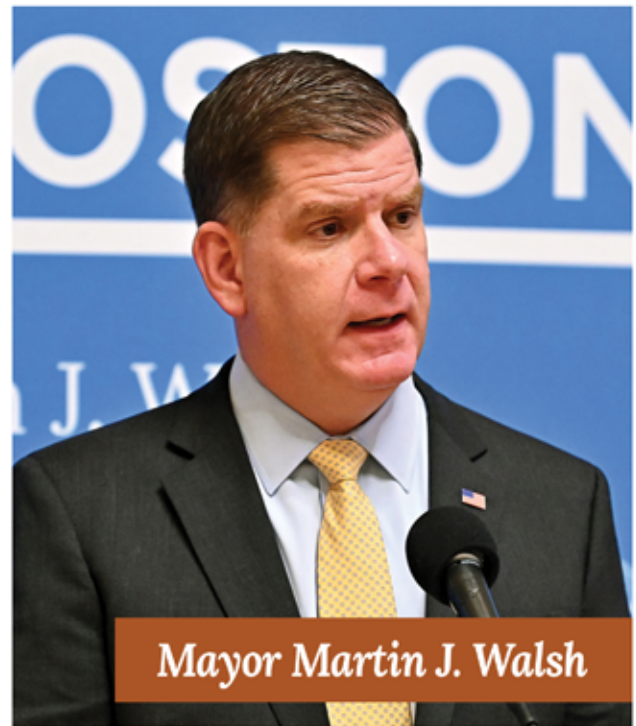
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LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Friends,

2020 was a challenging year for everyone, but it also brought out the best in our city. That was especially true of our municipal workers, who stepped up and continued to serve the people of Boston with creativity and determination. It was especially important for the Boston Parks and Recreation Department to adapt to the realities of the pandemic, since they are tasked with maintaining and improving our essential open spaces and serving members of the public directly.



With many businesses and recreational activities temporarily shut down in the interest of public health, and with travel options limited, our public parks took on a new significance. More than ever, residents relied on our parks as peaceful escapes from the day's stresses; as places where kids can play freely; and as places where people can exercise, stay healthy, and safely gather with friends and family. We have never been more grateful for our parks system. And more than ever, we are committed to maintaining and enhancing these beautiful community spaces.

Boston Park Rangers and maintenance staff did an outstanding job, and set an example on our frontlines by donning masks and practicing social distancing while continuing to serve the public. With events and programs cancelled, the Parks Department also pivoted to online fitness classes, virtual meetings and hearings, and limited youth programming within strict social distancing guidelines to keep residents active and entertained in a safe way. Through it all, we continued our work to expand public access, opening new vistas in our Urban Wilds and the expansive Emerald Necklace so that park users of all ages and abilities could enjoy nature in the heart of the city.

We also found creative ways to continue our favorite annual traditions, safely. The annual Mayor's Garden Contest took place remotely, as did a new pumpkin carving contest, and we broadcast the annual Boston Common Tree Lighting live on WCVB TV-5. We even created brand-new events, including the very popular Drive-in Movie Series. I'm proud of the ways we adapted our programming this year.

That being said, I certainly missed the events we had to cancel, especially our annual Coffee Hours, which normally are wonderful opportunities for me to meet with residents in-person at neighborhood parks all across our city. When these events can safely resume, I think we'll all have a newfound appreciation for these beloved traditions.

I'm proud that despite the pandemic, we were able to continue our historic investments in our citywide park system. The Department worked closely with designers and contractors to complete scheduled construction projects and provide places where people could exercise, stay healthy, and gather safely with friends and family. A series of completely rebuilt parks and playgrounds opened during the fall in Roxbury, Dorchester, Hyde Park, Mattapan, and South Boston, with several more scheduled to open this winter.

Major upgrades moved forward as we launched new master plans for Boston Common and Franklin Park, marking the largest investment in the Emerald Necklace since the 1800s. We also continued to invest in green spaces that protect our neighborhoods from coastal floods and storms, as part of our efforts to strengthen our entire 47-mile coastline with a system of resilient parks, trails, and beaches.

I am grateful to everyone who supported this work, especially our frontline parks workers and residents who complied with safety protocols while enjoying our parks. This past year has emphasized the importance of investing in community resources that promote public health and wellbeing, which is why Boston's park system is more important than ever.

Sincerely,



Martin J. Walsh
Mayor of Boston

INTRODUCTION

In a time when outdoor activities were as vital as ever to the quality of life for city dwellers, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) redoubled its efforts to maintain, improve, and program one of the most iconic and accessible park systems in the United States. Our open space resources include Boston Common, America's first public park, its first botanical garden (Boston Public Garden), and Frederick Law Olmsted's historic Emerald Necklace park system that meanders through the city from Franklin Park to Boston Common.

The Department oversees 16 historic burying grounds, two golf courses, three active cemeteries, and an expansive open space inventory including more than 2,000 acres of neighborhood parks, playgrounds, tot lots, athletic facilities, city squares, and urban wilds along with the City of Boston's inventory of public street trees.

In 2020, the BPRD adapted to the changes experienced worldwide as we transitioned to working remotely and adjusted practices in the field to ensure the safety of our workers and the public. With social life and wellness activities moving outside, Bostonians used our parks more than ever before. Our Park Rangers, tree division, trades, maintenance, and horticulture teams kept our properties beautiful, clean, and safe for all our visitors, amid extremely challenging new protocols and COVID-safe staffing levels.

Each member of the BPRD team, whether public-facing or behind the scenes, stepped up and delivered exceptional service this year while adapting to the changes in daily life as at-home teachers, caretakers, food distribution workers, aid volunteers, crisis managers, and much more.



“
... Bostonians used our
parks more than ever
before.
”

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

BOSTON COMMON AND FRANKLIN PARK ACTION PLANS

Two of Boston's most iconic parks — Boston Common and Franklin Park — are currently the subjects of extensive planning processes. Thanks to the sale of the Winthrop Square Garage, Mayor Martin J. Walsh committed \$28 million to revitalize Franklin Park and renovate and enhance Boston Common.

The Boston Common Master Plan kicked off 2020 with a January open house hosted at the Josiah Quincy School in Chinatown. The goal of the Plan is to create a vision for the Common that will serve the people of Boston and visitors alike while protecting this special place for decades to come.

The meeting consisted of a presentation on the project's guiding principles, summary of community engagement, site inventory and analysis to date, and schematic opportunities for various areas throughout the park. Throughout the year, the Action Plan team kept the project website updated at www.bostoncommonmasterplan.com with current activities and posts. Additional outreach was done through virtual open house discussions and presentations to stakeholders associated with the Common.

January also marked the first community meeting for the Franklin Park Action Plan attended at the William Devine Golf Course Clubhouse by over 200 people. In February, Action Plan team members attended the Franklin Park winter festival hosted by the Franklin Park Coalition and met with members of the community to talk about the Plan and discuss winter use of the park.

As public meetings were scaled back due to COVID-19, the team shifted online and over 6,000 people took part in a project survey launched in April with analysis of findings posted in July on the project website at franklinparkactionplan.com. The Action Plan team also launched the Wonder Walk, a self-guided walk through in Franklin Park, in September.

MUDDY RIVER

Work has begun on Phase 2 of the Muddy River Flood Risk Management Project. Over the next three years we anticipate a wide range of integrated activity from Leverett Pond to Boylston Street in Boston and Brookline including dredging to ease the flow of the river; bank stabilization; protection of historic structures and landscape features; control of invasive species; habitat creation for fish, turtles and amphibians; planting of wetland and riparian vegetation, trees and shrubs, and more. The project will provide important flood control, environmental restoration, and stewardship of the waterway.

TREE CANOPY ASSESSMENT

In the fall of 2020, the City of Boston received an updated Tree Canopy Assessment from the University of Vermont Spatial Analysis Laboratory detailing change in the city's tree canopy coverage from 2014 to 2019. The study finds that there has been canopy loss, particularly on private property, and canopy gains, especially in the growth of new street tree plantings. The overall citywide canopy coverage has remained consistent over these five years at 27 percent. This study and its data will inform the forthcoming citywide Urban Forest Plan.

URBAN FOREST PLAN

We received 11 Requests for Proposals for the City's first-ever Urban Forest Plan and are in the process of finalizing consultant selection. The Plan will be the first of its kind for Boston, setting citywide goals for canopy protection and expansion for the next 20 years that are responsive to climate change, development pressure and growth, and high quality of life expectations for all city residents. This planning effort will engage a broad range of stakeholders whose activities impact urban trees so that recommendations, priorities, and policies will be shared and carried forward through long-term implementation.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

In 2020, the Department developed the framework for the next update to Boston's Open Space and Recreation Plan. The plan inventories all open space lands throughout the city including each parcel's protection status, ownership, and management. In the coming year, the Plan's authors will engage with Boston's residents to learn about open space needs and priorities to inform our work for the next seven years.

PARCEL PRIORITY PLAN

The Parcel Priority Plan is a planning effort that looks at how Boston can prioritize parcels for open space expansion to meet current and future needs. The planning process laid the groundwork for an evolving and collaborative discussion around park system expansion through the lens of equity, climate resilience, and access.

In 2020, the project pivoted from in-person engagement to online due to COVID-19. More than 1,200 people shared their priority locations via an online survey, phone, and email resulting in the start of a priority parcel list that we will be able to adjust over time with public input and new opportunities. We are in the process of developing the draft priority parcel list using data modeling, public input, and interdepartmental knowledge and intend to reopen the survey in the coming year making any adjustments necessary to ensure residents from all our communities are represented.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The BPRD Design and Construction Unit oversees historic preservation, landscape design, capital improvements, planning, and infrastructure throughout City of Boston parks. The Unit also handles service orders and small repairs beyond the scope of services performed by the Maintenance Division.

Despite a temporary halt on construction activities and related delays due to the pandemic, the Design and Construction Unit cut the ribbon—virtually—on 15 newly renovated parks city-wide. Following are highlights from 2020.

DORCHESTER PARK

During the first week of November the City of Boston reopened the George Wall Playground. The \$535,000 in renovations were funded by Mayor Walsh's Capital Improvement Plan and Youth Lead the Change, the Mayor's participatory budget for accessible equipment that gives young people power over one million dollars of the city's capital budget.



The design retained the large climbing structure central to the playground while two age-appropriate play structures were replaced with new state-of-the-art equipment for children ages 2 to 5 and 5 to 12. The project included four bays of swings separated and rearranged with a single bay of swings with two toddler bucket swings. A separate bay of swings features three belt swings, an ADA-compliant bucket swing, and a "Friendship Swing" that allows two children or a parent and child to swing together. The Department also added an accessible drum set and a wooden play frame encouraging children to reach further into the natural areas and engage their creative play. New site furnishings included benches and an accessible community picnic table.

DOWNER AVENUE PLAYGROUND, DORCHESTER

Funded with \$1,150,00 from Mayor Walsh's Capital Budget, site improvements include new two new entrances, more transparent fencing along the perimeter, 2 to 5-year-old play space with rubber safety surfacing, an exercise station, bottle filling station, small dog recreation space, half-court basketball court, cafe tables with game boards, amphitheater seating space, accessible walking path throughout the park, pathway lights and new trees and plantings.

Downer Avenue Playground was established in 1972 and is a quiet, neighborhood gem on the southwest side of Jones Hill, adjacent to the Hancock Street Steps. The park was reopened in August and has a partnership with the Jones Hill Association to help manage the dog recreation space.



AMATUCCI PLAYGROUND AND STONEHILL PARK, HYDE PARK

During the first two weeks of October the City of Boston reopened Amatucci Playground at 1460 Hyde Park Avenue and Stonehill Park at 25 Stonehill Road. The budget for each facility was approximately \$500,000 funded by Mayor Walsh's Capital Improvement Plan.

Improvements shared by both facilities include new play equipment and resilient safety surfacing, open lawn areas, site furniture and fencing, and tree plantings. The parks feature swings and separate play structures for children ages 2 to 5 and 5 to 12 with a wide variety of activities such as puzzles, climbing nets, slides, rope bridges, and multi-level ramps and platforms.

RESERVATION ROAD PARK, HYDE PARK

The \$5 million Reservation Road Park project in Hyde Park, finalized in 2020, completed the work that started with the multi-purpose artificial turf field that was constructed as an early deliverable at this park. The project included a completely redesigned skate park, porous pavement parking area with lights, improved access to the natural area including a new loop path with a crosswalk, and a boardwalk and overlook of the Mother Brook.

ORTON FIELD, SOUTH BOSTON

Funded with \$510,000 from Mayor Walsh's Capital Budget, the improvements to Orton Field include a site drainage system and a new synthetic turf multi-purpose field. Surrounding the turf field is a three-lane asphalt running track. New deciduous trees are planted in pervious pavement alongside the track, providing shade. An existing chain link fence along two sides of the field was straightened and repaired, while a new chain link fence was provided on the remaining two sides.



The Condon School and Boston Center for Youth and Families are both located adjacent to this field, and this renovation allows children attending these programs to enjoy exciting, new active recreation opportunities.

ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELDS

More than \$2 million was spent on new artificial turf fields at Pagel Playground in Roslindale and Madison Park in Roxbury. Pagel received new turf at the soccer field and the Madison Park upper multi-purpose/football field, track and lower multi-purpose/baseball fields were resurfaced.

GRANTS

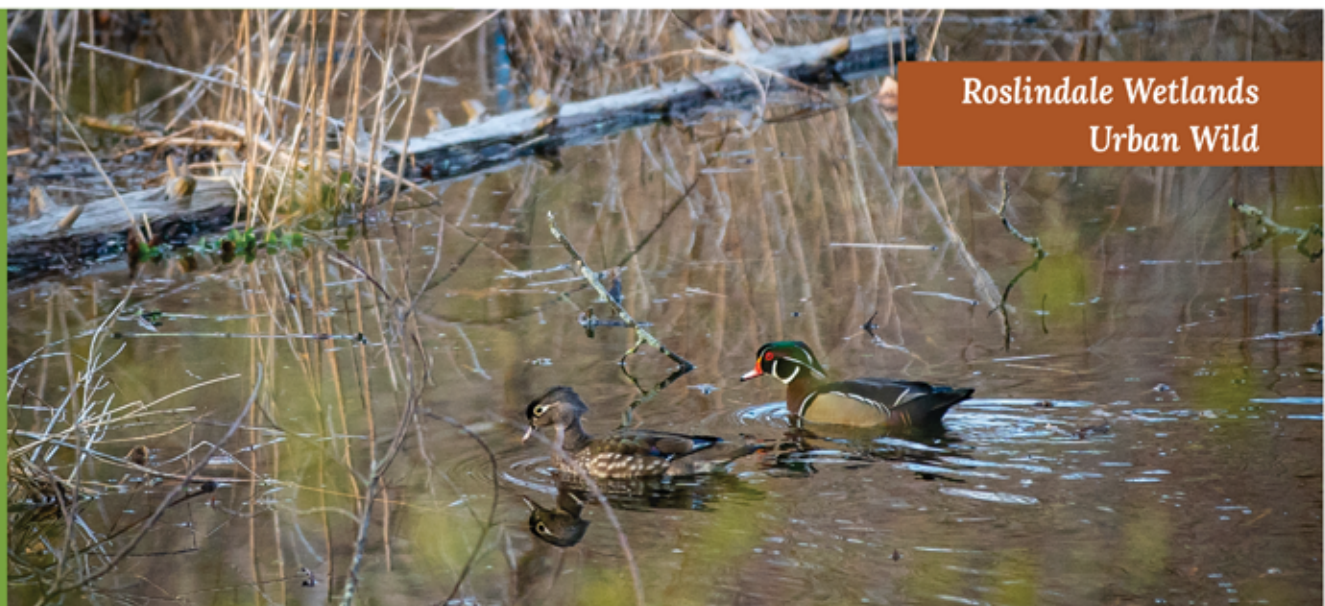
In 2020, the Department's Design and Construction Unit applied for two grants offered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). Both grants were awarded in November 2020.

One application sought \$400,000 from the state's Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant program for the reconstruction of Mission Hill Playground in Mission Hill. It will help renovate the playing field, the children's play area, and the passive recreation features of this park.

The other application sought just over \$337,000 for the purchase of an 0.8 acre parcel of undeveloped land in Roslindale, the largest private parcel within the designated Roslindale Wetlands Urban Wild. That application went to the Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) grant program on behalf of the City of Boston Conservation Commission.

When obtained in early 2021, the land will be added to the other parcels in this urban wild already held by the Conservation Commission, allowing the City to complete a trail system in this urban wild, thereby adding more opportunities for walking and experiencing nature to Roslindale.

In the case of the LAND grant, the Department team applying for the grant was assisted by community groups including the Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association, the Roslindale Wetlands Working Group, and other citizen activists.



BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The Business Operations Unit provides the Department with management, analysis, and oversight of the myriad of business operations that help support critical services to the City of Boston. The Unit's goals are to strengthen existing and build new relationships to serve park users as well as provide revenue streams for the Fund for Parks and Recreation that support our programs for Boston youth.

The operation of the iconic Swan Boats at the Public Garden remained closed in 2020, marking the attraction's first extended closure ever in its 143-year history. Operations at the Boston Common Frog Pond were also shuttered this year. There were some bright spots on Boston Common, however, as the Earl of Sandwich (including their new outdoor pizza oven) was able to open and the Visitor Information Center opened its doors welcoming folks to a newly renovated lobby and gift shop.

Another bright spot was the opening of the Jamaica Pond Boathouse and the Courageous Sailing program in Jamaica Plain. Equipped with extensive new policies to keep patrons and staff safe, Courageous provided 1,009 boat rentals to adults and families while maintaining a perfect safety record. Although youth programming capacity was significantly reduced due to the pandemic, successful hybrid programs were offered to students. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department ensured that public restrooms at the Boathouse remained open throughout the season for those seeking outdoor activities.



Jamaica Pond
Boathouse

Our “fruitful” partnership with the Massachusetts Farmers Market Association (MFMA) continued at Copley Square. With stringent safety guidelines in place, the Copley Square market hosted over 30 different vendors and provided more than 58,000 shoppers with fresh, local, healthy food over the course of its 2020 season. MFMA vendors processed more than \$9,000 worth of SNAP benefits and more than \$6,900 in Wicked Fresh Dollars were redeemed. These programs, including WIC and Senior Farmers Market Coupons, helped bring fresh food to buyers of all ages and incomes.

PERMITTING

In 2020, the Permitting Unit issued 1,794 permits for all parks and playgrounds from January 1 to December 31. Of those, 473 were for adult athletics, 650 were for youth athletics, 481 were for special events, and 190 were for weddings. The Permitting Unit staff worked to adapt to COVID-19 health guidelines and adjustments in policies regarding park usage including sports and all types of public gatherings. The Unit held a series of conference calls to train and brief permit holders on COVID-19 restrictions and sports reopening.

Permitting was directly involved in the placement of warning signs in parks, assisting in the establishment of pop-up testing sites at Moakley Park, Blackstone Square, Franklin Square, and East Boston's Central Square, and teamed up with partner agencies in fighting food insecurity with farmers' markets in the Fenway, Copley Square, Codman Square, Dudley Town Common, Adams Park, and Central Square.

Despite the challenges of working through the pandemic, the Unit coordinated with Netflix to provide necessary permits for the filming of “Don't Look Up,” a major production with an all-star cast including Meryl Streep, Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Lawrence, Chris Evans, Timothée Chalamet, Cate Blanchett, Jonah Hill, and Ron Perlman.

The Unit further supported the arts by working with the Boston Art Commission to situate temporary art in the park system, including an installation on Boston Common by Lilly E. Manycolors, a mixed Choctaw mother and interdisciplinary artist and scholar known for her emotionally excavating artworks, and “To Each Era Its Art. To Art, Its Freedom,” an experiential sculptural work created for Boston by Mexican artist Jose Dávila at Christopher Columbus Park.

With limitations on office hours and the permitting of all activities, customer service was even more of a priority with thousands of calls and emails handled throughout the year.

At the same time, existing partnerships were maintained with local institutions that have invested in park improvements including Emmanuel College, Suffolk University, Northeastern University, and Emerson College.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

As the division tasked with providing free events and programming, the External Affairs Unit was able to pivot to COVID-safe, high-quality, free programming during the pandemic, all leading up to our virtual Boston Common Tree Lighting hosted by Mayor Walsh and broadcast in a special program on WCVB TV-5.



The beginning of the year began as it normally does during the February school vacation week, with the annual Children's Winter Festival on Boston Common attended by over 2,000 local children. Free attractions included the 45-foot long Toboggan Tunnel mountainous adventure with twin roller lanes, the Snow Mazing maze, the Snowzilla Jr. inflatable winter themed slide, the three-car Trackless Train, hands-on games, and much more.

As soon as the extent of the pandemic was made clear, Parks staff brainstormed ways to provide safe activities and took advantage of their successes in social media to present new programs and adapt existing programs, including Pics in the Parks, the first-ever Pumpkin Carving Contest, Parks BINGO, the Boston Activity Book, the Mayor's Garden Contest, How to Make a Flower Box, Let's Make a Fairy House, Bird Nest Building, and Boston Blooms with Daffodils. The most successful socially-distanced outdoor series was the popular Drive-in Movie Series hosted in summer and fall, entertaining over 9,000 attendees throughout 16 shows.

Despite the postponement of many signature events and programs, the support of the private and corporate sectors remained strong with fundraising continuing in an incredibly challenging charitable environment. We thank all those who have contributed.

Our community engagement efforts went online as we pivoted to virtual community meetings and webinars. All in all, we hosted over 40 virtual meetings, ensuring that our Design and Construction, Parks Commission, and Tree Hearing meetings continued. We began advertising our meetings in languages other than English, customized to each community. Parks-themed zoom backgrounds are available for those working remotely.

MAYOR'S MURAL CREW

The Mayor's Mural Crew completed its 29th summer of employing Boston high school students to create large-scale public art projects in city neighborhoods and parks. Instead of the traditional summer experience of painting murals in neighborhood parks or on small business walls, the Mural Crew focused in 2020 on a selection of street activism projects and placemaking outdoors following COVID-19 public health guidelines.

To provide more Boston teenagers with a safe, in-person experience of working on meaningful projects amidst a global pandemic, the Mural Crew employed nearly triple the amount of youth for their ordinary summer program, with 31 teens participating representing 12 different local high schools from ten neighborhoods.

Boston's third annual citywide Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration took place October 31 and November 1. Bostonians submitted photos of their loved ones via an online form, and this year's altar, or "ofrenda," was placed at the south end of Franklin Park on the golf course side of the bridge at Scarboro Pond. This year's Dia de Muertos fell on the rare occurrence of a "blue moon," the second full moon in the same month. Families and friends were invited to enjoy a walk outdoors, or a "Paseo de la Luna Azul" (Blue Moon Stroll), to take in the views of the elements of Dia de Muertos and the tradition's relation to the natural world.



Other Mural Crew projects included land art installations using only native material and whimsical pathways in Franklin Park with a dozen sculptural structures including a beech tree treehouse by Scarboro Pond, a series of landscape watercolors and illustrated map designs of public parks in Boston, pop-art style mask self-portraits painted six feet apart on plywood against barn doors in Franklin Park and to be installed in public spaces across the city at a future date, and social justice sidewalk quote designs including a temporary installation of youth artist Leah Prodigalidad's design painted on a Franklin Park sidewalk along Blue Hill Avenue.

The Mural Crew also created a social distancing installation around Boston Common's Parkman Bandstand in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics, encouraging users to stay safely apart while enjoying the beauty of the through a series of leaves painted with turf paint to mark individual spaces on the grass.

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND RANKINGS

Boston landed near the top of the 2020 ParkScore list compiled by The Trust for Public Land ranking how much access citizens have to parks and park amenities. The annual ranking uses mapping technology and demographic data to determine how well the largest cities in the United States are meeting the need for parks.

Boston's ninth place score was higher than Chicago, New York City, St. Louis, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and San Diego on a list of 100 cities and moved up from 13th place in 2019. With most Boston residents living within close proximity to a park, the city's highest score was in the category of access where Boston earned 100 out of 100. Boston's high percentage of area dedicated to parks (17%) and strong playground access score also boosted the city's ParkScore rating.

MAINTENANCE

The Parks Department's Maintenance Division beautifies, manages, and maintains the City's park system. Based out of headquarters in Franklin Park, Parks Maintenance crews care for squares, fountains, game courts, street trees, and almost 200 additional acres of urban wilds and non-traditional open space properties. Working within COVID-19 guidelines, in 2020 a total of 6,770 new park maintenance requests were received with 6,612 completed including existing requests.

Due to this year's unusual public health circumstances, the Division's work was fueled more than ever by their dedication to creating safe parks for all to enjoy. Our dedicated workers began 2020 with snow removal duties and ended the year with a record-setting Nor'easter on December 17.

HORTICULTURE

In 2020 the 18 Horticulture staff members (11 dedicated greenhouse staff, five Public Garden staff members, one Kelleher Rose Garden staff member, and one Martin's Park staff member) were responsible for producing and maintaining the plantings in our parks at a time when outdoor activities and the beauty of nature were more essential than ever to residents and visitors alike.

The Horticulture Division's mission is to continue the tradition of supplying Boston's constituents with beautiful plantings to enhance the appeal of our open spaces. The staff based in the greenhouse facilities at Franklin Park kept up with the latest in greenhouse growing techniques to ensure the best training in plant production and maintenance while hiring trained candidates with a passion for horticulture, providing them with a career path in their chosen field.



During the year, the Horticulture staff grew over 20,000 finished plants from seed or plug in the Franklin Park Greenhouses, which were then planted and maintained in over 60 dedicated sites across the city. Over 30,000 finished plants were installed in city parks and open green spaces. In addition, the division planted over 25,000 bulbs in the Public Garden, another 30,000 bulbs in city parks and open green spaces, and began the planning stages of a vegetable seed giveaway, all in preparation for spring 2021.

CEMETERY DIVISION

The Parks Department oversees three active cemeteries maintained by the Cemetery Division on more than 200 acres of land containing over 250,000 gravesites: Mount Hope Cemetery in Mattapan; Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park; and Evergreen Cemetery in Brighton. The Division also manages the Historic Burying Grounds Initiative's 16 historic burying grounds.

As the division most heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the cemetery division performed triple the number of burials compared to a normal year due to the pandemic's surge in the spring. Despite this tragic increase, the cemetery staff did not miss a single burial or day of operation since the pandemic struck in March, providing these essential services to families in their time of need.



The Division once again participated in the annual nationwide “Wreaths Across America” event in December dedicated to remembering the sacrifices veterans have made in wars since the American Revolution.

GOLF COURSES

The 2020 golf season was prepared for an early start in March—then the public health restrictions hit. The grounds staff at the William Devine Golf Course at Franklin Park in Dorchester and the George Wright Golf Course in Hyde Park were able to get both facilities in great shape for the rescheduled opening in June. Despite a shortened season and limited tee times, city golfers were still able to play more than 39,000 rounds at each of the two courses.

Staff at both courses faced the new health guidelines and restrictions with skill and professionalism. In addition to the usual operational duties involved in running two popular golf courses, crews performed enhanced cleaning of buildings, golf carts, and grounds machinery equipment multiple times each day. The leadership at the City's two golf courses provided a safe environment for golfers and employees while providing a quality golf experience to city residents.

RECREATION DIVISION

The Recreation Division provides high quality, free sports activities to Boston's youth along with fitness programs for all ages. The recreation team continued their work in 2020 both online and in-person, following social distancing guidelines. More than 150 Boston youth worked at the summer Sports Centers, a camp-like experience for younger children, and supported soccer and lacrosse instruction.



Free winter, summer, and fall fitness classes kept more than 2,400 Bostonians moving during over 250 hours of free virtual and in-person classes including bootcamps, chair yoga, line dancing, and walking groups. Summer Sports Centers were conducted at Moakley Park, East Boston Stadium, and White Stadium at Franklin Park where 4,520 kids were able to safely participate in activities such as archery, obstacle courses, and fitness classes.

In 2020, 94 youth employees beautified and maintained the George Wright and William J. Devine Golf Courses. Golf lessons at the two sites served 108 participants and the Department also continued its partnership with the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Foundation to help deserving young men and women who have worked at golf courses in Massachusetts obtain a college education. For 25 years, more than 155 Boston students have benefited from the program.

ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL

In 2020, Animal Care and Control appointed a new Director and welcomed the Division's first full time staff veterinarian and veterinary technician. The new leadership ensured the safety and well-being of our furry friends throughout the city. The Division also worked with architects to complete a study for a proposed shelter to be situated within Franklin Park.

Animal Care and Control responds to emergency calls for animal assistance, investigates animal welfare concerns, and enforces City ordinances and state statutes. The Division provides humane education, care, and support for pets of residents in need, and maintains an affordable adoption program. The Division's animal care facility is located in Roslindale. Administrative offices relocated to a newly renovated space on the first floor in 1010 Massachusetts Avenue.



Amid the pandemic, the Division re-envisioned ways to support and connect with residents in need and rolled out a pet food and supply pantry, extended the length of time allotted to the temporary sheltering for hospitalized owners, and increased the number of pets made available for adoption. Thanks to generous supporters, Animal Care and Control successfully launched its Amazon wish list. As a result, the animal care facility received hundreds of donations of toys, treats, and other pet supplies.

Animal Care and Control also expanded its social media presence, publishing content to new accounts at Twitter @animalboston and Instagram @bostonanimalcontrol.



HISTORIC BURYING GROUNDS INITIATIVE

Boston's most historic final resting places are preserved and maintained thanks to the Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI), dedicated to the comprehensive restoration, ongoing conservation, and heritage interpretation of Boston's 16 historic burying grounds. An updated Historic Burying Grounds Initiative Master Plan was completed this year at a cost of \$37,750 with online publication scheduled in 2021.

Other highlights during 2020 included completion of wall repairs and replacement at the rear of the Dorchester North Burying Ground, including the concrete capstone. The steel fence on top of the wall was also repaired and repainted for a total sitewide construction cost of \$98,815.

Completion of slate gravestone conservation in Copp's Hill Burying Ground in the North End encompassed the conservation of approximately 150 gravestones and resetting of another 800 gravestones with work taking place both at an indoor conservation studio and onsite. The total projected cost was \$207,400 but increased by \$59,600 to accommodate more resetting and conservation work with a grant of \$104,000 from the first round of the Community Preservation Act helping to fund this project.

Tomb repair was completed at Dorchester South Burying Ground in Dorchester including some of the oldest burial locations in the site. A large slate grave marker previously used as a tomb door was found inside a tomb broken into many pieces. This marker is currently being restored by a stone conservator and will be placed on a brick base on top of the tomb in Spring 2021. The total construction cost of this project was \$104,220.

A \$40,000 award was received from the George B. Henderson Foundation for gravestone conservation in Eliot Burying Ground in Roxbury. A gravestone condition survey was completed in conjunction with Historic Boston Inc. in preparation for public bidding of conservation work.

Landscape restoration efforts continued at Dorchester North Burying Ground and Bennington Street Burying Ground in East Boston with invasive plant removal, planting bed maintenance, mulching, use of native wildflower mixes, and stump removal.

In the fall of 2020, a unique call went out to the public for assistance in placing gravestones and fragments removed from their original sites over several decades during the 20th century. Some had fallen and others had broken, leaving fragments lying on the ground. To save the gravestones from further deterioration and theft, they were removed in the hopes they could be repaired and replaced. Many were poorly labeled or the labels had deteriorated. Other gravestones were returned that had been found during street repair work downtown and given to the Bostonian Society for safekeeping.

A total of 11 fully intact gravestones lay ready to be placed in the correct burying ground, hence the outreach to historians, researchers, and genealogists who might have had records indicating where the person was originally interred. Information found on the stones and in historical sources provided clues, but no definitive answers. The effort remains ongoing.

BOSTON PARK RANGERS

Working directly with the public during an unprecedented health crisis, the Boston Park Rangers maintained an uninterrupted presence throughout all our parks in 2020. Enforcing rules, regulations, and general laws remained a vital part of their role, resulting in park protection and preservation. Issuing citations for quality of life and parking violations remained an integral means of assuring that the investment in our parks remained protected.

Despite the early impact of the pandemic, the Rangers successfully held a training academy that resulted in eight new seasonal park rangers joining the ranks and being deployed in early May. Five of those recruits continued with the service to participate in a comprehensive Mounted Unit Training School.



The entire staff consistently provided a public safety presence during a period that saw an overwhelming level of activity in City parks while encouraging all visitors to adhere to the guidelines of social distancing and wearing masks. The Rangers also brought needed services to those challenged by homelessness and drug addiction while continuing to provide visitor services by offering informal interpretation regarding the historic and contemporary aspects of our parks both from an environmental as well as public assistance perspective.

Efforts in wildlife management and animal control highlights included the annual Canada Goose egg addling initiative along with responding to issues for injured ducks and animals in the Public Garden lagoon and throughout the Emerald Necklace. Leash and fouling ordinances were also strictly enforced on daily patrols.

URBAN WILDS PROGRAM

The Urban Wilds Program stewards the City's 30 permanently protected conservation land holdings. The pandemic meant a significant reduction in the small army of corporate and community volunteers and donors who help maintain these spaces. Behind-the-scenes work continued protecting our urban wilds and other natural areas from development, encroachment, and uses that degrade their natural character while taking the opportunity to promote city-owned open space resources for passive recreation and other uses in keeping with their natural character.

BOSTON PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The Boston Parks and Recreation Commission is a seven-person review body appointed by the Mayor. The Commission oversees the Parks and Recreation Department and has authority over the parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, islands, urban wilds, and cemeteries in its inventory. The Commission was created by the approval of Chapter 185 of the Acts of 1875. The authority of the Commission is set forth in the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 45 and in Municipal Code Section 7.4.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Christopher Cook, Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space
Ryan Woods, Commissioner

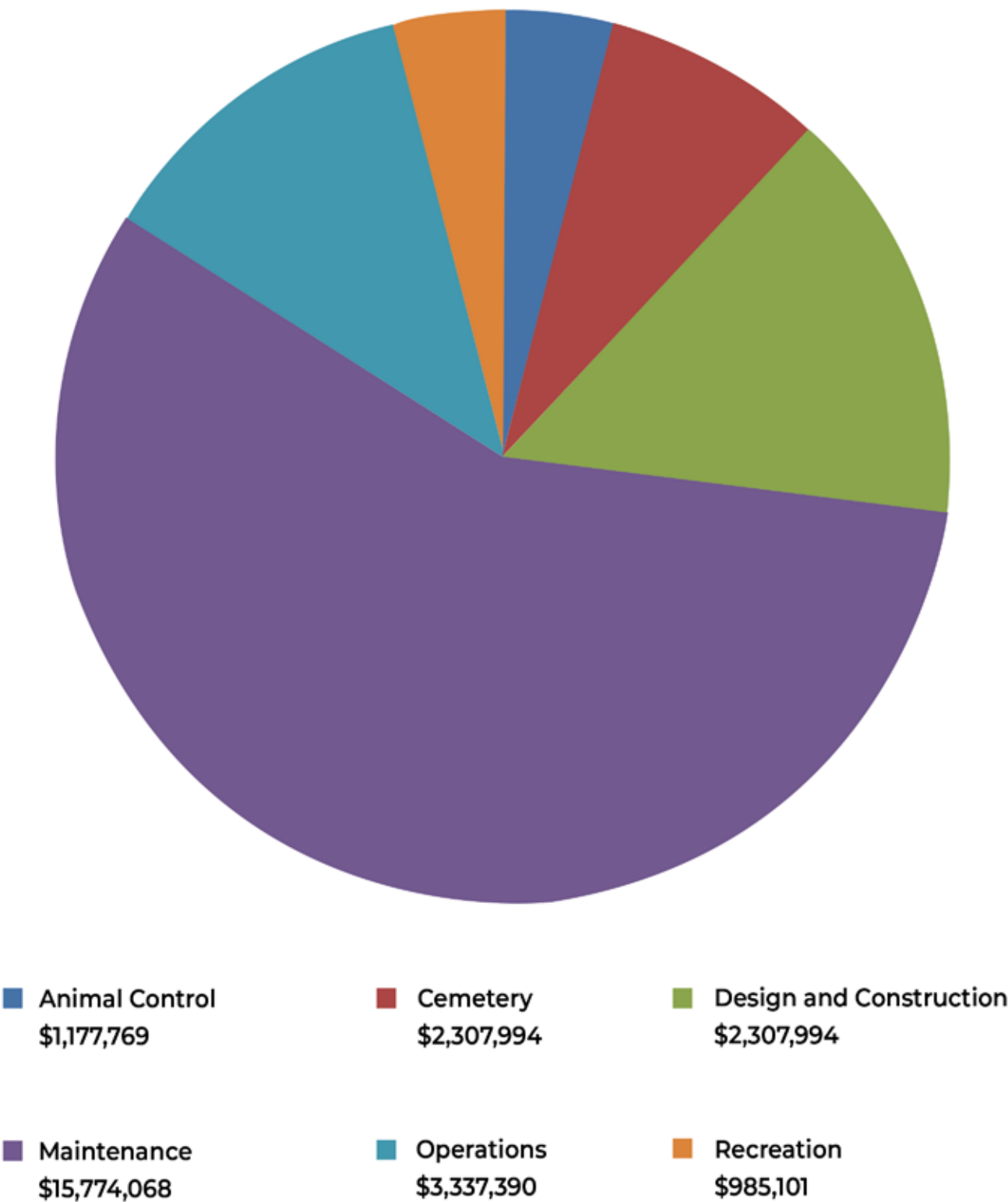
Elisa Birdseye, Associate Commissioner
Anne Connolly, Associate Commissioner
William Epperson, Associate Commissioner
Leonard M. Lee, Sr., Associate Commissioner
David Queeley, Associate Commissioner
Carrie Marsh Dixon, Executive Secretary
Liza Meyer, Chief Landscape Architect



*Residents arrive at the
Fall Drive-in Movie Series located at the
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center*

2020 OPERATING EXPENSES

Total Expenses:
\$27, 868, 167



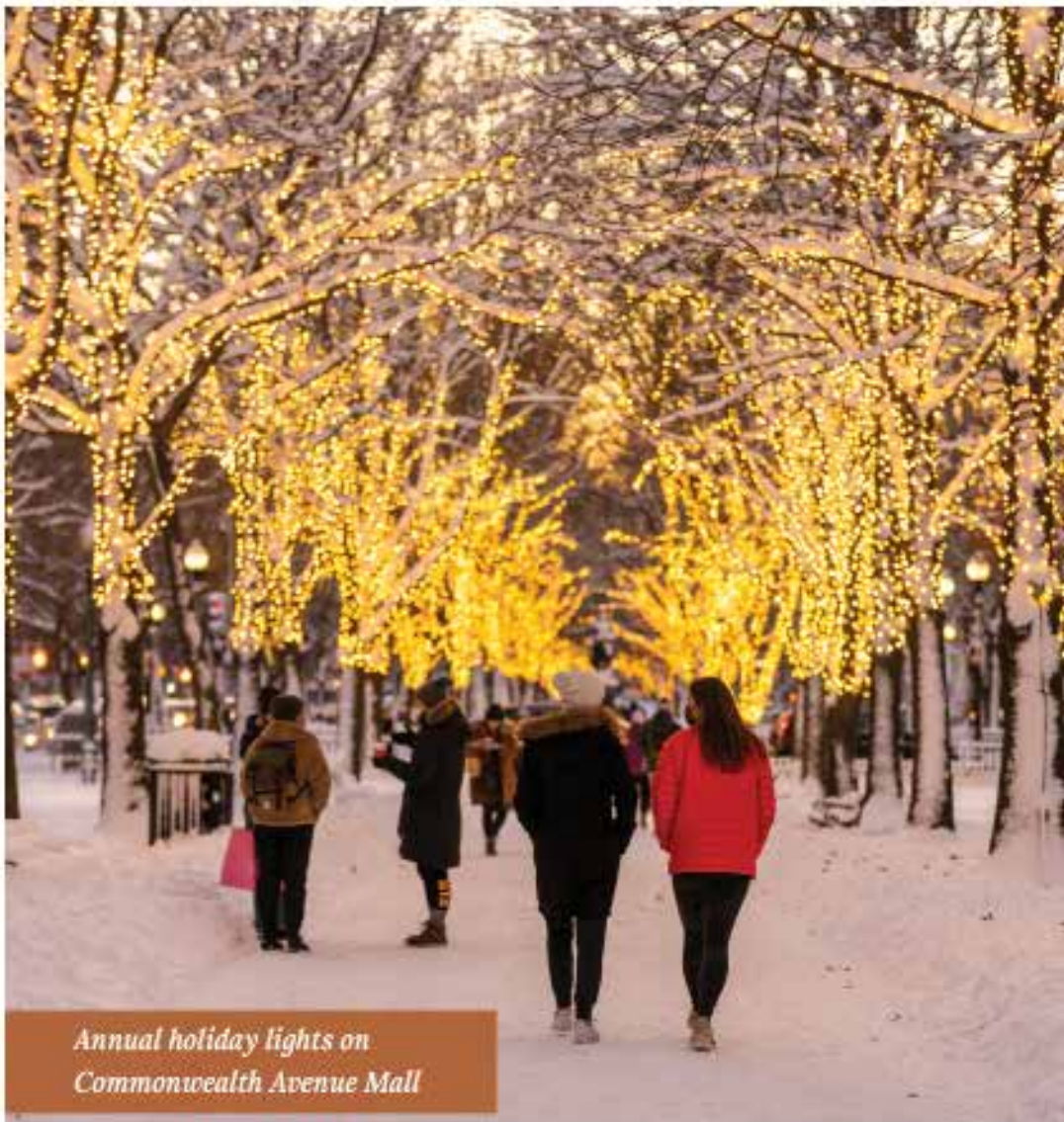


RONAN PARK WELL

On December 10, Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods and City Archaeologist Joe Bagley held a morning press conference at Ronan Park in Dorchester regarding a deep hole that had opened up in the park following a rain storm, discovered by a visitor to the park the previous Sunday. The Department and Boston Police secured the site and engineers were dispatched to study it. City Archaeologist Bagley did a video inspection of the hole and determined that the hole was a well, originally associated with the house of Mary Pierce, and would have been in use until the house received running water in the late 19th century. The house was demolished between 1910 and 1918 to create the park. The newsworthy sinkhole was filled after giving us all an enticing glimpse into Boston's past history.






- #1:** Our staff not only continued their normal day-to-day duties, but also took on many other roles throughout the pandemic
- #2:** All of our Parks planning initiatives continued ensuring a bright future for open space in the City of Boston
- #3:** We safely conducted quality, free programming with the hope of putting a smile on your face
- #4:** Our Design and Construction division cut the virtual ribbon on 15 newly renovated parks throughout the City of Boston
- #5:** With Bostonians using our parks more than ever before, our Maintenance Division worked tirelessly to keep our parks clean & safe for all users
- #6:** We made some exciting new investments in our Animal Care & Control Division
- #7:** We hosted our first ever Drive-in Movie Series for Bostonians of all ages, free of charge
- #8:** Community engagement efforts went online as we pivoted to virtual community meetings and webinars
- #9:** We safely conducted recreational programming both virtually and in person
- #10:** The Mayor's Mural Crew executed a summer of safe socially distant art projects with Boston youth



*Annual holiday lights on
Commonwealth Avenue Mall*

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston
Boston Parks & Recreation Department
1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118

(617) 635-4505
www.boston.gov/parks

   [bosparksdept](https://twitter.com/bosparksdept)

Edited by: Jon Seamans
Designed by: Shanna Dixon